

## **Minutes of DAAC Meeting**

### **Call to Order**

Co-Chair Seren Derin called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

### **Attendance**

DAAC members present were Seren Derin and Madeline Peters, Co-Chairs, Reginald Andrade, Bernadette Hait and Joe Tringali

Others present were Gerald Weis, Select Board liaison, Carolyn Holstein, DAAC liaison, and members of the public Dana Goddard and Jane Gamache

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### **Minutes**

Minutes from the December meeting were not available.

### **Update on Membership**

Ms. Derin said that she had called Myra Ross and asked her to be a member of the DAAC. Ms. Ross has not called back to date. There was discussion of possible future members.

Ms. Derin said that Jim Macrostitie is a member, but hasn't attended a meeting in months. Ms. Holstein said that she would give him a call to see if he still wishes to remain a member of the DAAC.

### **Public Parking, Access Issues**

The DAAC members noted that it was very difficult to find "van accessible" parking spaces near the Bangs Center. Folks driving regular cars with handicapped placards often park in the van spaces to attend Senior Center functions, and may park there all day. Discussion centered on whether to ask for more regular handicapped parking spaces for the Boltwood garage area, or whether to ask the Senior Center to request that their patrons not use the van accessible spaces. Regular parking spaces can be used with handicapped placards, it was noted.

Ms. Derin noted that the van accessible space in the Boltwood garage area behind the Monkey Bar does not have enough space in the stripped area for wheel chair access. She has had great difficulty getting back into her van when using this space. Pushing the curb back 6 inches could solve the problem.

The Committee noted that there are not enough handicapped spaces in front of Town Hall. There is just one space in the lot in front of Town Hall and one along Spring Street near the Lord Jeffrey Inn. There are two behind Town Hall as well.

### **Bus Stops**

DAAC members noted that the bus-stop waiting areas have not been shoveled this winter. There had been an agreement with the PVRTA that they would keep the areas outside of the downtown clear, particularly along Amity Street and University Drive. Ms. Hait commented that the stop closest to Amherst Medical on University Drive was very important and that it has not been cleared at all this winter.

Ms. Holstein said that she would contact Al Byum at the University and remind him of the PVRTA agreement to keep the bus-stops clear.

**HP parking in private business lots**

Several people mentioned that they have had difficulties using the parking lot behind the Amherst Cinema that is owned by the Bank of America. There is just one handicapped space, but other drivers sometimes park too close, and have illegally blocked both Ms. Derin and Mr. Tringali on occasion. They police have been called to assist, but they cannot tow on private property.

The Committee agreed that a letter is needed to private parking lot owners, asking that they enforce the Handicapped Parking Law.

Ms. Holstein said that she would look up the ZBA Special Permit to the Amherst Cinema to see what the parking requirements are in that lot.

Mr. Tringali wondered if the “Handicapped Parking Patrol” should be resurrected. They used to take pictures of cars parked in the HP spots and send to the local police for ticketing. Perhaps Police Chief Charlie Sherpa should be alerted to the parking problems folks with disabilities have, Mr. Tringali said.

**Town Emergency Plan**

DAAC members had many questions concerning the Town’s Emergency Plan. Are there emergency first aid kits available? Where are the emergency sites that are handicapped accessible? How does the Town know who is disabled? The Red Cross has emergency shelters, but where are they? Who are the folks in charge at the emergency shelters? Is there a place for disabled folks to register with the Town? Will the “Reverse 911” system be helpful for those with special physical needs?

Select Board Chair Mr. Weiss said that he would try to have the Town Manager and perhaps the Health Department Director attend the next DAAC meeting and present the Emergency Plan to the Committee.

**Butternut Farm Development**

The DAAC asked to see plans for the proposed HAP Butternut Farm development. Ms. Holstein received the latest building plans from HAP and shared them with the Committee. Proposed are three fully assessable units out of 26 total units. All units are visitable by persons in wheelchairs, and the community room, laundry and mailroom are accessible as well. The DAAC was pleased with the plans overall.

**Visitability Ordinance**

Mr. Tringali brought a copy of a Town ordinance from Bolingbrook, Illinois that required all new housing units to be “visitable”. That is, an external door, hallways and a first floor bathroom all must be universally accessible. Mr. Tringali thought that such an ordinance might be important for Amherst to adopt. Ms. Holstein said that she would discuss the idea with the Planning Department staff. She noted that the Amherst Housing Authority dwelling units that are being built on Main Street are “visitable” and that the proposed “Strawberry Fields” development along South East Street is fully accessible on the first floor.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Holstein, staff liaison